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SUBJECT: INDONESIA ESTH HIGHLIGHTS: JULY 2008

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ENVIRONMENT

Forest Conservation Programs Need Large-Scale Funding

[¶1.](#) The Director of Forest and Water Resources Conservation of the State Ministry for National Development Planning (BAPPENAS), Basah Hernowo, announced on July 23 that Indonesia's forest and water conservation programs will cost Rp. 6.5 trillion (USD 726.3 million). Indonesia hopes that most of the funding will come from grants. There are a total of 55 energy, infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, riverbank, and weather-climate projects included in the program.

Environmentalists Urge Halt of Reclamation Project

[¶2.](#) Environmental activists called on the Jakarta City Administration to cancel its reclamation project on the North Jakarta Coast. Jakarta's Development Assistant, Sarwo Handayani, stated on July 20 that the city would start reclamation and revitalization of Jakarta coastal areas in 2009. The reclamation project covers 2,700 hectares including 32 kilometers of coastline. According to Environmentalist Firdaus Cahyadi, the project will destroy a significant portion of the mangrove forest in the city, severely affecting the area's marine eco-system and increasing the chance of large-scale flooding in the old Jakarta region. New business development will also encourage additional people to relocate to Jakarta, further stressing environment resources. The Jakarta Regional Environmental Management Agency-BPLHD is preparing an environmental assessment for the project.

Interfaith Youth Camp on Climate Change in Surabaya

¶13. Youth delegations from ten Asia Pacific countries participated in the Asia Pacific Inter Faith Youth Camp on Climate Change 2008 in Surabaya on July 27 - 31. The Indonesian Foreign Affairs Department, the Surabaya City Government, and Tunas Hijau, an environmental NGO, organized the camp. The gathering included 150 participants from environmental groups and interfaith forums. The youth camp provided a forum to discuss religious and environmental issues. Participants made recommendations for Asian countries to increase environmental education, establish an environmental network, and commit to responsible environmental leadership.

Arsenic Pollution Uncovered on East Coast of Sumatra

¶14. In July, a Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology survey uncovered arsenic contamination in ground water on the east coast of Sumatra. The contaminated area covers 100,000 square kilometers. Experts believe the arsenic is naturally occurring rather than derived from pollution. According to the study, the arsenic content in Sumatran ground waste exceeds the World Health Organization's ambient level (0.01 milligram per liter of drinking water). Deputy Minister for Natural Resources Conservation and Environmental Degradation Control Masnelyarti Hilman has asked local governments to test the condition of ground water in the area in response to the report. Experts link arsenic in ground water to respiratory problems, skin disease and cancer.

MOF Plans to Establish REDD Commission

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¶15. On July 18, the Secretary of Research and Development of the Ministry of Forestry (MOF) Nur Masripatin announced plans to establish the Reduce Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) Commission. The Secretary General of the MOF will chair the Commission. The Senior Adviser to the Minister of Forestry for Forest Partnership will serve as the Commission's Vice Chairman. Other members of the Commission will include directors general and deputy directors general from various government ministries. The Commission will evaluate and issue certificates for carbon emission reduction.

Bekasi Inaugurates Gas Methane Burner Site

¶16. On July 1, State Minister of Environment Rachmat Witoelar inaugurated a new methane gas burner site near the Sumur Batu dumping area, Bantar Gebang Sub-District, West Java. The burner will reduce the amount of methane gas emitted during the burning of organic waste. There is only one other methane gas burner in Indonesia. PT Gikoko, a Japanese firm, won the tender for the project. The World Bank has provided a US\$1.2 million loan to fund the construction of the burner.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

Indonesian Students Win International Prize

¶17. On July 8, a team of students from Bandung Institute of Technology (BIT) won the Rural Innovation Achievement Award at the International Imagine Cup competition at the Louvre Museum in Paris. The team, which consisted of three students from the Electronics and IT Department and one from Art and Design Department of BIT, defeated teams from Columbia, Egypt, India and South Africa. Roughly 200,000 students from 100 countries took part in the competition. The team developed a "butterfly system" which can immediately report on environmental problems through voice, SMS, MMS, mobile applications and websites. The team received US\$ 10,000 and the opportunity to cooperate with researchers and scientists at the Microsoft Research Center in Bangalore, India.

U.S. Scientists Conducted Geo-hazards Research

¶18. During July, U.S. scientists from the Jackson School for

Geophysics of the University of Texas at Austin conducted a seismic reflection survey of the Sumatran Coast in collaboration with the Indonesian Agency of Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT) and the UK National Oceanographic Center. The objective of the research cruise was to gain deeper understanding of the geology and tsunami generation potential of the area. Researchers from Indonesia, the U.S. and the U.K will share the data generated from the cruise and conduct joint research over the next few years.

HEALTH:

East Java Requests Funds to Fight Malnutrition

¶9. In a letter dated July 11, the East Java Health Department asked for a budget increase of Rp. 15.6 billion (US\$ 1.7 million) from East Java's Parliament to provide support for the 5,461 malnourished children in the province. The East Java Parliament has stated that it needs to analyze the proposed corrective program before they can approve the budget.

Affordable Health Care Program Launched in East Java

¶10. The East Java BAZ (an institution that collects Muslim charity donations) launched a new program to provide affordable medical services to 10,000 poor people in East Java on July 7. Participants in the program received a 50% discount on medical services provided by selected clinics throughout East Java. Participants must register with the East Java BAZ in order to qualify for the discount. Donations from wealthy individuals provide the primary source of funding for the program.

Indonesian Children are Vulnerable to Pneumonia

¶11. At the launching of the Asia Strategic Alliance for Pneumococcus on June 30, Prof. Dr. Sri Rezeki S. Hadinegoro of Gajah Mada University noted that pneumonia is the main cause of mortality in Indonesian children under-five years of age. ASAP member Prof. Cissy B. Kartasasmita also noted that the Government of Indonesia has not yet included PCV7 (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine 7 Valent)

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in the national health program.

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